

Opportunities for Consumer and Family Participation

1. Perform Quality Assurance and Improvement functions. Collect data by conducting surveys, participate as mystery shoppers (to assess quality of customer response and ease of access to services), review procedures for accessing services, etc.
2. Participate on focus groups and provide important opinion feedback on policies and educational material.
3. Help draft and review public information materials that convey important information about the local system. Editorial boards can be formed to fill this role.
4. Form speaker's bureaus and assist with community public forums to help spread the LME message to the community and to reduce stigma and discrimination. In this sense, consumers can be an important partner to the LME as well as assisting people with disabilities in becoming aware of and accessing services.
5. There are opportunities for consumers to be involved in the review process for provider enrollment in community networks:
 - Serve on workgroups to write Requests for Proposals,
 - Work on committees to develop specifications for program development and selection criteria that contract agencies are required to address in their proposals,
 - Review applications,
 - Interview potential contractors,
 - Make recommendations on which contractors are selected.
6. Participate in the development of instruments used in monitoring the quality of services being provided (report cards for example).
7. There is a huge need for Peer Support Services wherein consumer Peer Specialists assist consumers in navigating the system and provide information and support. These Peer Support Services will serve in a complimentary role to Case Management and other professionally provided services and supports.
8. Assist in the coordination of transitional services for individuals moving to the community from State Facilities. A major barrier to recovery for these people is the isolation they feel when they return to their communities. Peer Support during this critical time significantly increases their chances of successfully adapting to life in the communities.
9. Participate in the development of self-help recovery initiatives (WRAP {wellness recovery action planning} is one example). 12-step groups are another good example.
10. Create or support the creation of Club Houses, where people with disabilities can gather to socialize and support each other.
11. Staff "Warm Lines" and be involved in other pre-crisis services for individuals who feel at risk of going into crisis.
12. Sit with an individual in crisis who is waiting to receive services to help support and calm them during a period of uncertainty.
13. Help create consumer friendly outreach and networking strategies.
14. Recruit and encourage other consumer and family members to participate in advocacy initiatives.

15. Participate in their local CFAC and in their local community collaborative as a voice of the consumer and families to ensure that consumer perspective influences policy decisions pertaining to the provision of services.
16. Participate on panels for Conferences and other trainings, sharing their knowledge, experience and recommendations.
17. Provide feedback with regards to community capacity, gaps in services, at risk populations and other needs in their community.
18. Review and comment on pertinent documents that identify how our systems function, i.e. LBP, State Plan, Child MH Plan, etc.
19. Serve on Area Boards of LMEs and on Boards of non-profits and other service providers.
20. Advocate at local, state and national levels either individually or with established groups.
21. Serve on Human Rights Committees in LMEs, provider agencies and State Operated Facilities.
22. Customer Service Functions:
 - Community relations and education to reduce stigma and increase community capacity to better support individuals living with MH/DD/SA challenges,
 - Consumer education initiatives regarding the service system.
23. Participate in all levels of the LME provider monitoring function. This could range from the development of “provider report cards” to site visits. This is a huge mandate to LMEs wherein Consumers and Family members could partner and provide invaluable help and perspective.
24. The employment of qualified consumers and family members should occur at all levels of the service system. This adds invaluable perspective and experience to the work force.
25. Serve on local Community Collaboratives. These inter-agency groups support and oversee the development of the local systems of care. Many family members co-chair these groups. This group consists of program *level decision-makers* from local child-serving agencies that partner to carryout the Comprehensive Treatment Services Program. This includes the Division of Social Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Local Management Entities, Local Education Agencies and the Administrative Office of the Courts as well as, private providers, along with families, family advocacy representatives and other community stake holders. Family member participation is part of the legislative mandate.